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ON PAGE A-22

NEW YORK TIMES
24 FEBRUARY 1980

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Churches Want C.I.A.'s Charter To Bar Any Use of Missionaries

WASHINGTON, Feb. 23 (UPI) — Reports that the Carter Administration wants to ease proposed restrictions on the Central Intelligence Agency's use of missionaries is meeting resistance in the nation's religious organizations.

The National Council of Churches, made up of 32 Protestant and Orthodox denominations, passed a resolution at a meeting in New York this week urging Congress to prohibit such use of missionaries. It asked Congress to make sure that the new agency charter includes "explicit prohibitions against recruiting or employing members of the clergy or church workers — American or foreign — as informants or agents in any capacity at home or abroad."

The council also requested a ban on C.I.A. personnel impersonating clergymen or church workers or establishing proprietaries purporting to be churches, church agencies, or religious organizations.

News reports have indicated that the White House would like to avoid a flat prohibition against the use of clerics, journalists and academics as intelligence agents or sources.